

SOVIET MENTAL CONDITIONING, INTERROGATION FOR VERACITY
AND FORCED CONFESSION TECHNIQUES

I. This title implies three Soviet activities and objectives:

A. Mental Conditioning

1. Of Communist agents and military personnel
2. Of prisoners in general
3. To facilitate interrogation to obtain information rather than false confessions
4. To obtain forced confessions with conviction the objective
5. For propaganda purposes

B. Interrogation techniques for obtaining truthful information in instances in which confession is not the objective.

C. Techniques for confessions including mental conditioning; terrorization, and mental and physical duress for obtaining true or false confessions.

II. The Communists appear to be very realistic in meeting their objectives in

- A. The selection of victims for specific purposes
- B. Utilizing effective methods and producing results in accordance with differences in susceptibility of the victims
- C. The time factor in producing results
- D. The selection of different methods according to the desired objective, particularly the differentiation between forced confession techniques and methods for obtaining information.

III. Mental conditioning covered in this review does not include mass psychology used by the Russians in the control of nations, large general masses of civilians, or psychological warfare.

A. Mental conditioning is pre-eminent in theory, concept and practice in Russia and has permeated the entire Soviet sphere. It is in consonance with Pavlov's physiological teaching, their most recent research work on conditioned reflexes, and Soviet ideology.

B. Although psychology has been relegated to the field of pedagogy, the emphasis placed on research in neurophysiology, psychophysiology, and neuropsychiatry indicates that Russia considers these fields of practical importance. They are adept in the application of the results of their research in these fields to mental conditioning, including the handling of prisoners.

C. Mental Conditioning of Communists

No details are available in this office on the mental conditioning of Communist agents and military personnel. The routine repeated loyalty indoctrination of workers, Russian ideological teaching in all schools, military including loyalty training even in medical schools and constant loyalty, security and intense enemy hatred training in the armed services indicate the importance attached to mental conditioning by the Communists. Surely, Russia is not this thorough without special security and loyalty teaching of their agents and instructions in every known method, device and trick to resist enemy attempts to obtain information from their agents.

D. Mental Conditioning of Prisoners

1. We have not received an analytical survey of the reasons why thousands of Chinese and North Korean troops want to return to their homelands or why thousands of others have no desire to return. Chinese and Russian environmental conditions, other factors and mental conditioning are not the same; therefore, an analysis of Chinese prisoners would not show the same results as in Russians.

2. The Communists have had thousands of prisoners and years of experience in the development of methods for the mental conditioning of prisoners. These include: their own political prisoners in camps; prisoners held for court trials; German, Japanese and other soldiers; suspected and actual spies of various nationalities; thousands of American and South Korean military prisoners of war now in their hands, and Americans arrested for suspected espionage. We do not know how many American prisoners will be susceptible willingly or by force.

3. One of our requirements not yet solved is the details of the Communist handling of prisoners. Interrogation of Communists captured by the U. S. troops has revealed little information, and the Communists have not yet released knowledgeable U. S. prisoners.

4. There were psychological reasons including favorable propaganda and care of the wounded early in the Korean conflict for the Chinese release of American prisoners to the U. S. lines.

5. There have been some reports on Communist mental conditioning of prisoners in general, such as the common practice of

handling pamphlets on Communism to prisoners, followed by the delivery of talks on the advantages of Communism. They sell Communism to many prisoners by daily repetition even three times a day at regular intervals.

6. They carefully select their victims for specific purposes, such as those who for some reason decide to cooperate with them against their own nations. The Communists select those who will make an impression for propaganda purposes, such as the American pilot who apparently cooperated as a propaganda dupe in the production of the sound picture to help the Communists convince the world that their E. charges were true. Probably the reasons for the pilot's apparent cooperation will not be known until there is an opportunity to debrief him and the other persons directly involved.

7. Some of their victims are easy prey, not by direct threats and more drastic duress, but by another approach such as telling them they will be well treated and returned to their homeland in good mental and physical condition if they cooperate.

a. Some prisoners are well aware of the past stories on handling of prisoners, such as subjection to exhibition for ridicule, traumatism, and even death by public mobs; physical duress; never returning home; and even beheading, shooting or other penalties by their captors.

c. The fear complex produces many submissive persons. They know open defiance of captors is not healthy and have not had adequate training to save themselves and protect security.

9. American Communists such as _____ in Shanghai help in conversion and other American Communists help convert anti-Communist prisoners.

10. The time factor is important to the Communists as shown by early release of returned prisoners in Korea; the timely production of the Bi-Motion picture; the use of drug stimulants and mental duress; exhaustion in rushing through some court convictions; and the long-term mental conditioning of prisoners, shown in the pro-Communist Japanese prisoners which were mentally conditioned for years by the Russians before they were returned to Japan. Many were never returned.

11. Because of the effect on world opinion, we can expect that the Communists will use conventional psychological interrogation techniques on many prisoners, and treat them in accordance with Geneva agreements. This has and will be done with prisoners they willingly return.

12. They will use their educational techniques repeatedly to win over the easy victims.

13. They may return some of the more resistant prisoners which have been subjected to a limited degree of mental duress, low diets and persistent repeated interrogation under various conditions.

IV. Mental conditioning to facilitate interrogation of strongly resistant prisoners including espionage suspects for obtaining truthful information rather than false confessions presents a difficult problem.

A. There is no reason for not believing that the Communists can readily obtain confessions without, as they claim, "old-fashioned torture," or the use of drugs. No doubt they have in mind mutilation

and other ancient practices of physical torture, and do not consider that torture includes mental duress, starvation diets and other methods of exhaustion to the degree of submission.

B. There are sound reasons for believing that drugs would to a certain degree accelerate obtaining confessions, but no reasons for believing that confessions cannot be obtained easily without drugs, or that drugs are reliable in obtaining truthful information. Reports are quite convincing that the Germans, Russians, and Satellites have used drugs experimentally many years, but no authentic evidence from any country that drugs of any kind are reliable in obtaining truthful information. Reports of the use of drugs for some confessions, apparently have led people in various countries to believe drugs can be relied upon for veracity of prisoners' statements. There appears to have been considerable confusion in the methods used for meeting the objective in confession for convictions, and interrogation for truth.

C. Communist mental conditioning covers all methods, from persistent education and mild persuasion to techniques for forced transient softening or complete breakdown of the mental faculties of the victim.

D. The open Soviet literature furnishes convincing evidence that the Russians are up-to-date in the use of the neuropsychiatric techniques used in this country on patients, and that the effects vary considerably.

E. There are many documents (referred to in past reports, which indicate that the Communists have explored the use of drugs (at least 25 different preparations) and other methods sufficiently to know their limitations in effectiveness in the interrogation and conviction of prisoners.

F. Reports lead us to believe that the Communists do not use stimulating drugs or narcotics routinely as supplements to interrogation; therefore, we assume that they have come to the conclusion that these preparations are unreliable and at times a detriment in obtaining truthful information from prisoners. A number of reports lead us to believe they have used drugs previous to some court trials.

G. The usual technique against resistant prisoners appears to be clever conventional psychological interrogation followed in some cases by methods of exhaustion, particularly of the nervous system, without the use of drugs.

H. Their vast experience surely has convinced them that somewhere along the line of increasingly drastic measures that the resistance of any man will break, but not always tell the truth. Also, that the mental resistance, including subconscious resistance of some men, is strong enough to withhold secret information. The breaking point in some men would not be reached until their mental faculties are so abnormal that the information they give may or may not be the truth. The Communists probably have been successful in obtaining truthful information from many men by their methods because most men would tell the truth before they reached the later stages of mental duress.

I. Although we have no evidence that the Communists depend upon the use of any one drug or combination of products or devices routinely in interrogations, their past treatment of some prisoners gives us warning that we can expect them to use drugs and other unconventional products, devices and methods under certain circumstances in espionage and as hopeful supplements in the handling of prisoners they have no intention of releasing.

V. Communist techniques in espionage and suggestions for defense.

A. Among the Communist activities we can expect them to use all kinds of trickery, drugs including toxic substances, electric and other applications to induce shock, the polygraph and hypnotism.

B. Primarily we can expect mental and physical duress, to break down resistance in interrogation of prisoners. This method of breaking the will to resist can be practiced anywhere but the other measures to supplement interrogation probably would be applied to prisoners at special centers only.

C. They may use drugs and other supplementary techniques, not that any one method assures veracity in any one individual, but because any means of loosening tongues such as the effects of alcohol or other methods for inducing speech in subconscious states may give them true or false information from a number of persons. By an analysis of the combined statements from a number of prisoners they might be able to delete the false statements.

D. Before the Communists use nerve stimulant drugs, they probably would first try other methods to break down mental resistance, such as persistent repeated interrogations, bright lights, starvation diet, barbarous quarters, not allowing sleep and strained positions in standing or other postures. They are not likely to use the stimulants and interrogation only, because very resistant prisoners are not likely to tell the truth under this treatment.

E. They may use narcotics and other nerve depressants, highly toxic substances or electric shock to incapacitate or even liquidate an

enemy victim before or after capture.

F. In subversive activities they are more likely to devise methods for tricking the victim to ingest drugs than by injection or inhaling. Administration to prisoners would be by ingestion or injection rather than inhalation. They may use narcotics to facilitate hypnotism, but hypnotism requires special training and even with a narcotic some persons cannot be hypnotized, and the most resistant would not reveal secret information if hypnotized.

G. Defense against all actions should primarily cover the selection of agents who have the greatest resistance before assignment, and then thorough conditioning to resist techniques without supplementary materials which they might carry.

H. Inasmuch as ingestion would be more widely used in the administration of drugs than by injection, agents could carry an emetic such as apomorphine for use against ingestion of too much alcohol or suspected enemy doses of other substances.

I. Other defenses against enemy actions should require more study including suggestions for concealment, such as the use of matched moulage patches, ingestion and recovery of materials and offensive devices to prevent enemy actions before and after capture.

J. We cannot expect equal mental reactions to artificially induced alterations of the mind, therefore for certain purposes we probably can spend time more profitably in utilizing techniques, devices and materials which are available than in the more remote and unrealistic approaches such as exploration of plant products in Mexico. Sufficient information

is available to show that exploration of the Mexican products is not likely to produce the results desired.

K. Our main security defense should be mental conditioning of selected agents to resist enemy actions to obtain information.

A/B, I, 2, 6

Chief, Security Research Staff

12 July 1955

A
OTR "Brain Washing" Report, June 1955, Attached

A, G 1. Attached is the report which was prepared by the _____ under _____ in the Training Division. As far as I know, most the actual work was done by _____ who is a good scholar and I think a capable young man.

2. As you know, the Security Office did not receive, as far as I know, a copy of this report although we should have since we have been active in brain washing problems for years and are fully represented on the Milltop committee and were present when this was brought up. I cannot understand why we did not automatically receive this report and I protested this matter. Whether you wish to do something about it or not is up to you.

3. In my opinion, this is a very good report and although does not extensively go into the matter it touches the highlights and covers the field very well. The Training people should be congratulated on this report and their suggestions I believe are worthwhile. Because it is good and fairly brief I am recommending it to you for your study and I am suggesting that you offer it to _____ for their reading.

A 4. As you know we were aware some report was being prepared but I do not believe Security was consulted in the distribution of this report. _____ asked me numerous questions about it and I (per your instructions) gave him information but I do not believe anyone in Security had the opportunity of studying it before its distribution. Since the material is important and some of it is quite hot I am somewhat concerned about the distribution of the report and I suggest, if possible, Security obtain from _____ a list of all to whom it has been distributed. The report contains several mentions of experiments and that is one of the items that does not bear wide distribution.

A D 5. I am setting out below a series of random observations in connection with this report which I think are pertinent. Whether or not we should suggest these to the Training Division or take them up in any way is simply a matter for consideration.

- a. This report contains no reference or discussion of the treatment, activity and problems encountered with the Chicom and North Korean POW's in our camps during the Korean War. The writer wonders whether we have learned

any lessons from these fiascos or whether ^{as a result} studies, reports were made of these situations.

- b. The writer has not yet seen and can find no references to in this report ~~report~~ on the POW activity of the Turks, British, Canadians, etc. while POW's in North Korea. These studies should be important.
- c. The writer often wonders whether or not we are attributing too much to the Chicom's in their POW control. The writer wonders whether or not their handle'bf POW's was deliberate and based upon exceptional training or something else again.
- d. This is very important and should be one of the highest priority items for the operations people. Every effort should be made to find out what instructions or training are given Chicom's as interrogators. Every detail should be studied. We should make positive efforts to pick up a Chicom interrogator either by snatching or defecting. We should certainly bend every effort to get information on their training and their oral and written instructions, etc.
- e. Refer bottom of page 65—This interesting point has occurred to the writer many times. Why don't lawyers for the POW's who are tried plead temporary insanity? It seems you could foul up any trial this way since you can get many psychiatrists and psychologists who would agree on this to testify as experts. Also see page 72a and 72b.
- f. In the writer's opinion, some of the training aids set up on pages 51-56 might be helpful or of absolute assistance to people having high IQ but the writer wonders whether this would work at the lower intellectual levels.
- D g. The writer notes that _____ techniques (merry-go-round technique) might be a very useful experience for some. See page 86, Section 6a and also note page 87, Section C.
- h. In addition to the obviously sound training ideas advanced in this report for defensive measures, the writer would like to suggest perhaps some of the following might well be considered in training ~~the~~ people defensively to resist brainwashing, elicitation, etc.

- (1) How to assume the appearance of stupidity.
- (2) What can be done to make a person of high intelligence appear mediocre or uninteresting to enemy interrogators?
- (3) Closely related to (1) and (2) above would be certain minor tricks of acting or playing the role of a stupid or dull type.
- (4) Has anybody done a study of laughter, humor or derision as a weapon?
- (5) How to simulate physical defects or pretend to be deaf, ill, nauseated or suffering from very poor eyesight?
- (6) What are counter harassment measures?
- (7) How best can you annoy or frustrate Chinese or Communist interrogators without suffering undue consequences?
- (8) Can practical jokes be worked out?
- (9) The writer noted in his brief associations with PW's that secret societies even KKK activity flourished and worked successfully as a morale booster and actual weapon against the enemy. The writer believes emphatically a study should be made of this type of activity.
- (10) Certainly SandE activity should be studied and taught. Planning escape in the opinion of the writer would be a strong morale booster and a cohesive force in POW activity (study British techniques, etc.).
- (11) The ever present problem of the informer or "rat" should be very carefully and scientifically studied not only to counter against this evil but to discover ways and means for trapping informers, exposing informers and defeating their efforts. The writer knows of no effort along these lines.
- (12) As a rule a senior officer takes command in a POW camp but the Korean War clearly indicated that one of the main efforts of the Chinese was to upset any leadership talents displayed by individuals,

to segregate ranks and reduce all POW's to a standard level except in certain instances. The writer is of the opinion that any group who may or may not fall into enemy hands should have a pre-determined system of leadership or command authority. Certainly this problem should be studied.

- (13) The Chinese or North Korean POW's clearly demonstrated mass activity and mass protest. This phenomena appears to have been rare in allied POW camps. This should be very carefully studied and its value as a defensive mechanism should be examined.
- A